

Ground Water Advisory Committee

Purpose

The Ground Water Advisory Committee (GWAC) assists the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Well Construction Regulatory Program in the mission to protect the public health through the development of safe and reliable drinking water wells. The GWAC plays an important role in the implementation of Michigan's Water Well Drilling and Pump Installation Contractor Registration Program. [Part 127 of 1978 PA 368 \(Public Health Code\)](#) establishes the structure and role of the committee.

Background

When Michigan's Ground Water Quality Control Act was passed as 1965 PA 294, an advisory board was established in the law to give the water well industry a voice in the new Registration Program. The Well Drillers Advisory Board was comprised of nine members, five of whom were registered water well drillers. Four well drillers were from specific geographic regions and one was an at-large member. The remaining board members were governmental officials representing the Department of Public Health, Department of Natural Resources (Water Resources Commission and Geological Survey Division), and local public health departments. The industry representatives were appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The initial advisory board played an important role in formulating Michigan's first well construction code, which became effective on February 14, 1967. Minimum qualifications for obtaining and maintaining a contractor's certificate of registration, standards for well construction and abandonment practices, minimum setback distances to isolate wells from contamination sources, well performance criteria, water testing, penalties for violating the code, and other provisions to protect public health are contained in the well code.

Through a Governor's Executive Order (No. 1994-1), the Well Drillers Advisory Board was abolished and the board's authority, functions, and responsibilities of the Well Drillers Advisory Board were transferred to the Director of the Department of Public Health. Because the state program managers needed the assistance of the industry and valued its input, the public health director reconstituted the committee. The Well Construction Regulatory Program was transferred from the Department of Public Health to the DEQ in 1996. The GWAC performs similar duties as the preceding Well Drillers Advisory Board and the committee structure has changed slightly due to the reorganization of state programs.

GWAC members are ground water industry and governmental professionals who are dedicated to the protection of public health and Michigan's ground water resources. The committee is beneficial to DEQ officials and gives industry participants an insight into statewide groundwater issues and governmental procedures. The GWAC serves as a vital link between government and the regulated industry.

Committee Functions

1. Evaluate the qualifications of candidates who have applied for registration as water well drilling contractors or pump installers and advise the DEQ as to whether the applicant meets the minimum qualifications.
2. Periodically review the registration examination process and content.
3. Advise the DEQ on technical aspects of well construction, pump installation, abandoned well plugging, and the field application of the well code.
4. Furnish input on proposed well code implementation policies.

Appointments

Participants in the GWAC are typically appointed for three-year terms by the chief of the DEQ Water Bureau. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please complete the following [application](#) and submit it to the Well Construction Unit, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Section, Water Bureau, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 30273, Lansing, MI 48909-7773. For information, call 517-241-1374.

Current Committee Members**Meeting Schedule for 2008**

April 4, October 10 – Meetings are held at the DEQ, Water Bureau, 2nd Floor North, Constitution Hall, 525 West Allegan Street, Lansing, MI 48933. Business meetings are open to the public. Call 517-241-1374 for an agenda and meeting times.